

DC-1 HISTORICAL NOTES

Capt. D. W. Tomlinson, USNR (Ret.)

First off, I was *not* aboard the DC-1 flight to Mines Field when the gear folded, or perhaps was not even lowered. Whatever happened was apparently due to human failure, and was hushed up! I was in the DC-1 riding copilot with Allen on several landings at Clover Field when one side of the gear knuckle would not have gone too far past dead center—this could be seen from the cockpit. By very slow and careful taxiing the plane could be gotten to the factory service ramp. There, supports were placed under wings and the gear completely lowered.

I, TWA, raised merry hell about this. Engineering swore it had to be personnel failure, hydraulic fluid being incompressible. We wanted a mechanical latch. Douglas simply implied the crew had goofed.

Finally, after gear failure at Glendale, Bellande pumped the gear down; then at Wichita when I pumped it down, TWA got the positive mechanical latch. This failure was never resolved and no explanation given. After 50 years I am still waiting!

About the AAHS story (page 105, fifth paragraph): It was obvious at the time that TWA had no choice but to contract with Douglas for the DC-1. However, because Frye, Lindbergh, and pilots wanted a trimotor, plus the various aircraft manufacturing interests represented on the TWA board of directors, what should have been a clear-cut decision became a very involved hassle. This is what I wanted to clear up at Santa Monica, but no one seemed interested.

Though, as the junior, and working full-time member of the TWA technical committee, charged with selecting the replacement airplane for the Fords and Fokkers, I was in on the discussions with Doug and Raymond on their first visit to New York. It was not until Dutch Kindelberger came to New York with data to support the Douglas claim that the bimotor would meet the TWA trimotor specs, that I went all out for the DC-1 concept. Having had ample time behind the nose engine of trimotors, I was well aware of its disadvantages, as well as an "engine-out" reliability.

When Dutch convinced me the combination of wing design, flaps, engine cowling, retractable landing gear *and* the two-position pitch propeller would enable meeting our specs, I went for it.

General Aviation, owned by General Motors which had 47.5% of TWA stock, made no concrete proposition until after the contract was executed with Douglas. Then they brought pressure to bear for a trimotor. Years later at a TWA seminar, Ernie Breech and I got together. He told me GA's belated enthusiasm and efforts were instigated by Frye and Lindbergh, who had no faith in Douglas to meet the DC-1 specs.

So in reality the preparation of trimotor specs and execution of a contract with GA for the trimotor was a half-hearted must-do for the TWA group involved, except Frye and Lindbergh.

Page 107, ninth paragraph: A.D. Smith had no part in the DC-1 development on TWA's side.

Page 108, "First Flight": After first take-off, Carl Cover made the first landing (emergency) on a fairway of the golf course adjacent to the south side of Clover Field. Cover took off from the fairway and landed back on Clover Field and Collbohm boarded the aircraft. After Cover made these flights, I do not recall him flying the DC-1 again during the many test flights through the summer of '33.

Page 110, last paragraph: I was not aboard the DC-1 on this flight.

Page 111, last paragraph: This is the first correct report published of the conference Allen, Collbohm, Oswald and I had in a hotel at Winslow re procedure to be followed in making critical and dangerous single-engine (failure simulated) takeoff. Truth is, I was gravely concerned about the spec "cut engine after 1000 feet of roll." The 1000 feet was set by the motor enthusiasts. I considered it arbitrary, hazardous and unnecessarily severe, but kept quiet as the bimotor was in enough trouble at time specs were being jelled by TWA. Hence, my request to Allen, responsible for test, that on the first attempt the right engine should be merely throttled back instead of switch cut.

Art Raymond now agrees I was in the copilot's seat. Collbohm was standing in back of Allen in the passageway, Oswald in back of him. Oswald now claims he was *not* there! Believe me, he was. Because Oswald had not made any of the routine performance test flights, I was impressed by his coming on the Winslow test.

Allen cut the switch as I strained every muscle to get the gear up. Just as I feared, the takeoff was a very close affair. We might have wound up in a ball of fire with the left engine at max power had the prop touched the runway. I let Allen know in no uncertain terms what I thought of his action.

A point not covered: Using *Cyclone* engines the DC-1 as first put through complete performance tests (except single-engine takeoff), then P&W *Hornets* were installed and tests repeated. For a single engine rate of climb test (Allen pilot, myself copilot, Collbohm observer or engineer), we took off from Clover Field under low overcast and poor visibility, a mile or so. Allen crawled east until he found a hole in the overcast (Allen would not fly on instruments), climbed on top and headed NW over San Fernando Valley and began the single engine rate of climb tests, left engine at full rated power, prop on low pitch. Suddenly, with no warning, the left engine blew its rings. The engine nacelle, and wing in back were covered with oil. He cut the switch immediately.

Underneath, through a hole in the overcast, Metropolitan Airport was clearly visible. I suggested to Allen we land at Metropolitan and let the factory truck over another engine

already installed in the quick attachable motor mounts. Allen, looking strong-faced, made no reply and headed SE to a point east of LA, where he found a hole, came down under the overcast (a 2300-foot ceiling) and crawled back to Clover Field. Had the right engine quit, all of us could have been dead ducks. From that day on I had no faith in Allen's judgment in an emergency.

Upon completion of *Hornet* tests the *Cyclones* were reinstalled for delivery of the DC-1 to TWA.

Page 113, third paragraph: On this DC-1 flight to east with Don Douglas and some others I was the pilot, *not* Cover. He was not even aboard. The DC-1 had *Hornet* engines. Now, after 50 years, and my personal log books gone (stolen from the Naval Aviation Museum at Pensacola) I cannot recall how come the *Hornets* on this critical flight. We flew nonstop to Albuquerque, paused for dinner, took off for Kansas City about 10:00 P.M. The plane was climbing at about 9000 feet when the left motor blew its rings. The nacelle and wing behind was a mess! I cut the switch and returned to Albuquerque. What Doug and his party did I no longer remember—I do recall Doug was less than happy! That was the death knoll of the *Hornet* engines.

P&W never explained the cause of these series of engine failures.

Page 113, fifth and sixth paragraphs, re Frye and Rickenbacker's flight: Ralph Ellinger acting as my copilot, I had the DC-1 at Glendale and prepared it for this flight—to be a big publicity deal—airmail cancellation, etc. Evening, with dense fog rolling into San Fernando Valley, I checked with the weather office which said it would last till noon the next day. At that time I was one of the few pilots who had taught themselves to fly on instruments. I had flown plenty of weather on the gauges, but had never taken off on instruments. Jack Frye was a good pilot, but to my knowledge, at that time he had done no instrument flying. Unless the DC-1 could be flown out of Glendale, the Frye/Rickenbacker flight was in trouble. I decided to make my first instrument takeoff. I had the airport turn on its runway lights—could barely see the ground from the DC-1 cockpit.

We made it, but my knees were shaking when we popped out of the overcast at about 500 feet. Ellinger was as white as the fog. We landed at Palmdale.

Page 116, paragraph 1: See previous comments on *Hornet* engines.

Page 116, paragraph 2: During the spring, summer and winter (well into 1936) the DC-1 was at least under control of TWA. The transcontinental nonstop record flight, and the speed-weight record flights were all TWA. The NAA simply furnished observers to certify observance of certain rules on the record flights.

I spent considerable time in summer of '35 exploring flight through thunderstorms. Had special *Cyclones* with two-speed blowers installed. On several flights I got the DC-1 up to 27,000 feet to fly through anvil heads. In the fall with bad weather coming on I used it to research over-weather flight. Made several flights east flying at 20,000-25,000 feet, on

top and between cloud layers. I came in to Newark on the tail of one severe hurricane which raised rain around New York and NE—nearly six inches of water on Newark airport. This particular trip convinced us we had to get above 30,000 feet. That set plans in motion for the *Gamma* stratosphere research in the summer of '36. I got the loan of a turbo supercharger from Wright Field for use on the *Gamma*.

It's a shame some misguided aviation enthusiast stole all my log books and other memorabilia from a glass case in the Naval Aviation Museum—no night security. I had the one log book covering the DC-1 tests. I could pinpoint a lot of significant events—always entered names of pilots, copilot, observers and any others of importance. Thorough as my log books were, I never kept a scrapbook. In my life, yesterday has always been finished business. It's amazing to me the number of aviation enthusiasts who are now interested in preserving aviation antiquity.

John Underwood, Glendale, CA

Mauno Salo, in his excellent DC-1 article, states that Tomlinson was copilot on the occasion of the belly landing at Mines Field. Art Raymond, in a letter to Dutch Kindelberger dated 2 Aug. 33, stated that Thaden (Herb?) was in the copilot's seat. I don't believe DWT was aboard.

Salo also states that the DC-1 was dormant for more than two years during the time it was Howard Hughes' property. On the contrary, HRH's log book shows that it flew fairly frequently, except for a period during 1937 when he was putting a lot of time on the Sikorskys (S-38, S-39, S-43).

Hughes got himself checked out in the DC-1 at Kansas City on Christmas Day, 1935, by a very reluctant TWA chief test pilot, Harlan Hull. The cockpit heater didn't work and it was bitterly cold. Hull showed up in heavy winter flying togs but HRH and his mechanic, Ed Lund, were only wearing business suits. They threw blankets over their legs and flew for more than an hour. Lund was almost frozen stiff and HRH could not have been much better off when he decided to call it a day. It was, after all, his birthday.

Hull, angry over having been called away from his warm hearth, was not about to call it a day. HRH had insisted on flying and, by God, he was going to fly. Hull shoved the throttles open, forcing HRH to take off again. He did it again on the next landing. Lund finally cut the switches. HRH, without a word, exited the airplane as soon as it stopped rolling. He was not seen again by either party for over a month.

Hughes made about eight takeoffs and landings on 1 Feb. 3 and, with Ed Lund in the copilot seat, flew to New York. There, they picked up Katharine Hepburn, who HRH had apparently taught to fly, and headed for Burbank by way of Wichita. Lund and Hepburn traded places at the controls and all three took turns catnapping on the aux tanks in the cabin during the 16.5-hour trip. The tanks filled the cabin had to be crawled over

to get into and out of the cockpit.

Can anyone explain why the DC-1 was fitted with a DC-2 wing at Miami early in 1938? The wing came from Eastern's NC13782 and was still on the airplane when it was delivered in England. Was the DC-1 involved in some sort of mishap at Miami? HRH's log book sheds no light.

Ed Young, Burbank, CA

Mauno Salo erred in his assumption that the Young on the Albuquerque flight was Clarence Young of the Department of Commerce. Of course it was my dad, Brig Young, as Ivor Shogran could have told Salo. My dad was leadman on the construction of the DC-1. He worked so hard meeting the deadline that it affected his health from then on. I lived only two blocks from the DC-1 construction area and had free access to the plant, so I watched it develop. Ralph Ellinger and Bill Birren became close family friends, along with their wives, Bea and Belle.

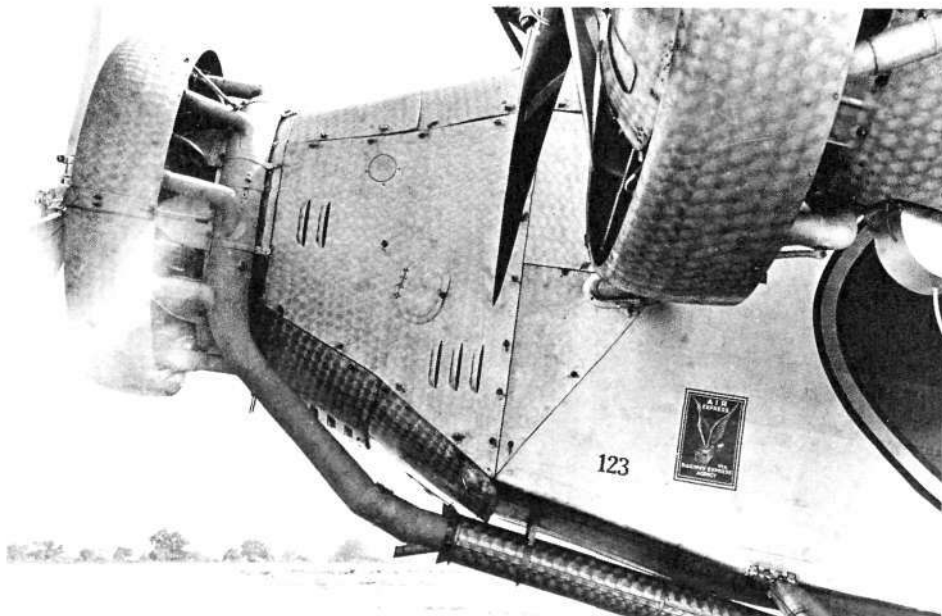
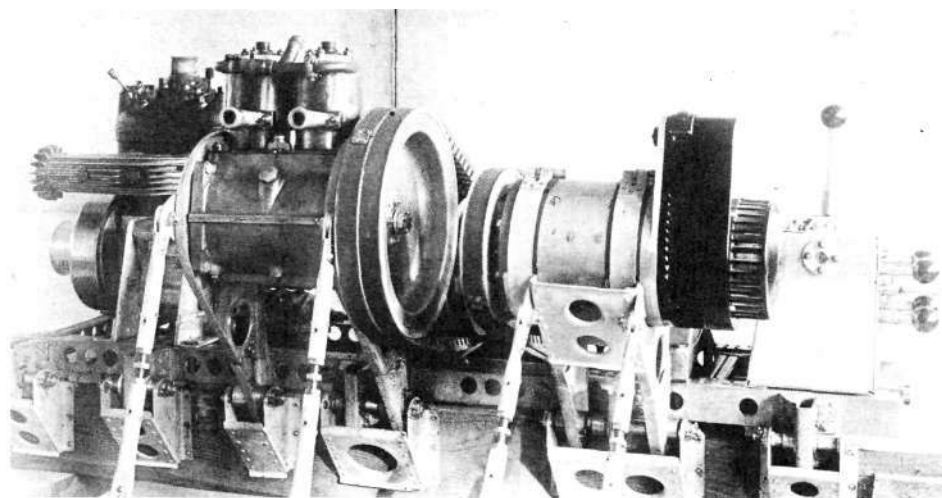
AVIATION NOSTALGIA

Charles Froesch, Oneonta, NY

While cleaning my aviation files I ran across these three photos which I thought

would be of interest to the AAHS and its files.

1. Is the front end of a Western Air Express Fokker F-10 trimotor with its engines equipped with the newly designed Townend ring cowl predecessor of the NACA engine cowl. I believe it dates back to 1929.



2. The small powerplant is that of the first airborne auxiliary power unit that I know of. It was installed in the hull of the Dornier DO-X flying boat in 1930 to render independent of ground energy supply equipment.

3. The small photo shows an airway beacon installed next to a highway gas station. I believe there were a couple of those installed between Los Angeles and San Diego with a small flying field adjacent to each gas station.

SHORT HISTORY OF A CIVIL A-36

Dick Phillips, Apple Valley, MN

In the Winter 1981 *Journal* we ran a photo of a civilian A-36 that had been submitted by Dick Phillips. At that time he had been un-



able to trace any history for the aircraft. Now, however, he is able to present nearly the whole story.

The aircraft was A-36A-1NA, NAA serial 15987, USAAF serial 42-83769. The full civil registration was NX54954. Its civil history is very short which accounts for it being an almost unknown example of its type.

In April of 1946, Everett Hogan of Mitchell, Nebraska, took three of his pilots to Ponca City, Oklahoma, to buy three aircraft from the War Assets Administration. Purchased on April 2, 1946, were AT-6, NX54953, Cessna T-50, NX54958 and our subject aircraft, A-36A, NX54954. Hogan ran an airport operation called Hogan Flying Service out of Scottsbluff and Mitchell, Nebraska. He had intentions of using the A-36 to perform at airshows around the central plains area during the summer of 1946.

Hogan's chief pilot was Clyde Adams, a recently discharged Army Air Corps transport pilot who had been flying C-46 and C-47 types in the CBI theater. Adams was to be the pilot of the A-36 for the airshow circuit.

During that summer, while doing an airshow at Spearfish, South Dakota, they blew the Allison engine in the *Invader*. The plane was left at Spearfish to await a replacement engine. In the meantime, Hogan had planned an airshow for the Labor Day weekend at Saratoga, Wyoming, and had apparently promised the crowd a fighter-type aircraft would be in attendance. Hogan borrowed

P-39 *Airacobra* NX61446 for Hogan to fly the Saratoga show with.

According to a newspaper clipping dated September 2, 1946, here is an account of what happened that day. "Adams, just completing a power dive, started to pull out at 600 feet when the ship went out of control and plummeted to the ground. Witnesses said the plane struck so hard it bounced several times and Adams was thrown out on the second bounce." Adams was killed instantly and the P-39 was a mass of twisted metal.

I have not as of this time been able to find out who really owned the *Airacobra*. I believe it may have been entered in the Cleveland races of 1946 but cannot back up that belief.

The A-36 was sold to DePonti Aviation in Minneapolis on December 30, 1946, and on the same date was sold to Woody Edmondson of Lynchburg, VA.

On January 3, 1947, Edmondson re-registered the ship NX4E and prepared it for the 1947 Cleveland racing season. On September 1, Edmondson had to bail out of the plane in the eleventh lap of the Thompson Trophy Race.

So ended the civil history of our mystery A-36 after only 17 months of civilian life.

The photo appearing in the Winter 1981 *Journal* was taken in May 1946. The plane was in front of the DePonti hangar in Minneapolis for some radio work.

I would very much appreciate any other details that our members may have on either of these two aircraft, especially the P-39-

RICHFIELD STEARMAN PILOT

Robert W. Diehl, Burbank, CA

In response to Ben Donahue's letter in the Spring 1983 issue of the *Journal*, Dudley Steele was the pilot of the Richfield Oil Co. Stearman.

VS-44 INFORMATION

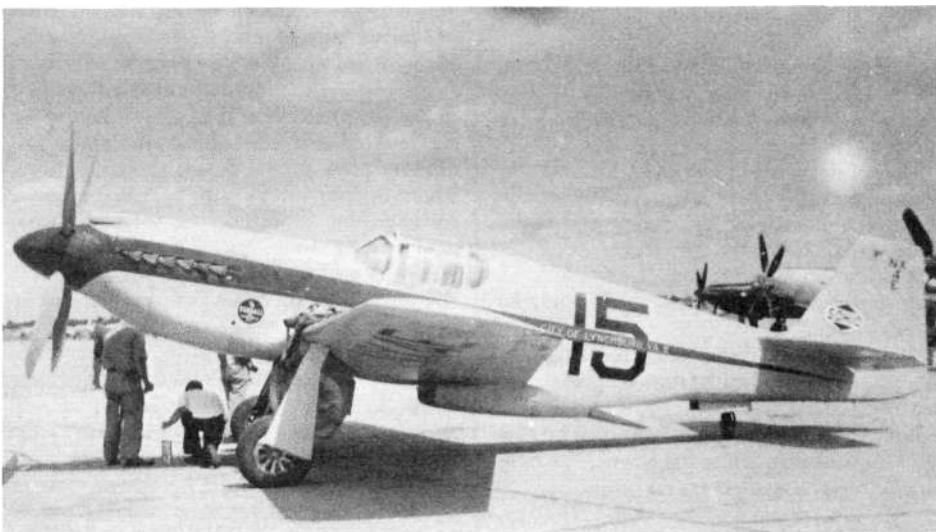
Norm Malayney, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Can.

In the Spring issue of the *AAHS Journal*, Vol. 28, No. 1, mention is made on page 76 that Skyways International once operated a VS-44 that crashed in the River Plate while smuggling drugs to Paraguay. I have recently communicated with the former president and vice-president of this company.

I would suggest you pass this information on to your VS-44 expert. Maybe he can contact the former owners and get the total story on the aircraft they operated and *have this documented* in the *AAHS Journal*.

The president of Skyways International which operated out of Miami, Florida, is as follows: Mr. Robert H. Swanson, Route No. 1, Armuchee, Georgia 30105.

Mr. Swanson flew a P-51 Mustang in the Sohio and Cleveland Air Races. He also purchased a de Havilland *Mosquito* aircraft from Canada in 1948 with the intentions of capturing Howard Hughes' around-the-world speed record. He could not find an automatic pilot



to fit in the aircraft, so he sold it to Dianna Cyras. She later became Dianna Bixby and flew N1203V in this same attempt at the speed record, as Robert Swanson wanted to.

FAIRCHILD FC-2

Richard J. Alden, Jaffrey, NH

While reading the Winter 1982 *Journal*, I became very excited when I got to the story of the Fairchild FC-2 by George H. Clapp. Being a Syracuse, New York native, seeing Amboy Airport in print there was quite a thrill. If you have Mr. Clapp's address on record, could you please send it to me? I just started a research project that involves Central New York aviation. Being able to contact Mr. Clapp would be a big help for me.

Thank you for your time and help. (And also for the great *Journals*!)

CONTEMPORARY NEWS REPORTING AND HISTORY

Art Schoeni, Dallas, TX

FLYING MACHINE SOARS 3 MILES IN TEETH OF HIGH WIND OVER SAND HILLS AND WAVES AT KITTY HAWK ON CAROLINA COAST. (From *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot*, Dec. 18, 1903)

The problem of aerial navigation without the use of a balloon has been achieved at last.

Over the sand hills of the North Carolina coast yesterday, near Kitty Hawk, two Ohio men proved that they could soar through the air in a flying machine of their own construction, with the power to steer it and speed it at will.

This too in the fact of a wind blowing at the registered velocity of 21 miles an hour.

Like a monster bird, the invention hovered above the breakers and circled over the rolling sand hills at the command of its navigator and, after soaring for three miles, it gracefully descended to earth again and rested lightly upon the spot selected by the man in the car as a suitable landing place.

While the United States government has been spending thousands of dollars in an effort to make practicable the ideas of Professor Langley of the Smithsonian Institution, Wilbur and Orville Wright, two brothers, natives of Ohio, have quietly, even secretly, perfected their invention, and put it to a successful test.

They are not yet ready that the world should know the methods they had adopted in conquering the air, but the *Virginian-Pilot* is able to state authoritatively its principle and chief dimensions.

The idea of the box kite has been adapted indirectly to the basic formation of the flying machine.

A huge framework of light timbers 33 feet wide, five feet deep and five feet across the top forms the machine proper. This is covered with a tough, but light canvas.

In the center, and suspended just below the bottom plane, is the small gasoline engine which furnishes the motive power for the pro-

PELLING and elevating wheels.

There are two six-bladed propellers, one arranged just below the center of the frame, so gauged as to exert an upward force when in motion, and the other extends horizontally to the rear from the center of the car, furnishing the forward impetus.

Protruding from the center of the car is a huge fan-shaped rudder of canvass, stretched over a frame of wood. This rudder is controlled by the navigator and may be moved to each side, raised or lowered.

Wilbur Wright, the chief inventor of the machine, sat in the operator's car and when all was ready his brother unfastened the catch which held the invention at the top of the slope.

The big box began to move slowly at first, acquiring velocity as it went and when half-way down the hundred feet the engine was started.

The propeller in the rear immediately began to revolve at a high rate of speed and when the end of the incline was reached the machine shot out into space without a perceptible fall.

By this time the elevating propeller was also in motion, and keeping its altitude, the machine slowly began to go higher and higher until it finally soared 60 feet above the ground.

Maintaining this height by the action of the under wheel, the navigator increased the revolutions of the rear propeller and the forward speed of the huge affair increased until a velocity of eight miles an hour was attained.

All this time the machine headed into a 21-mile wind.

A little crowd of fisher folk and coast guards who have been watching with unconcealed curiosity since September 1st were amazed.

They endeavored to race over the sand and keep up with the thing in the air but soon it distanced them and continued its flight alone, save the man in the car.

Steadily it pursued its way, first tacking to port, then starboard, and then driving straight ahead.

"It is a success," declared Orville Wright to the crowd on the beach after the first mile had been covered.

But the inventor waited. Not until he had accomplished three miles and put the machine through several maneuvers en route. . . .

(Continued on next page)

Historians beware of news accounts of historical events. I've personally found gross inaccuracies in news reports of historical events, but the above tops them all! —Editor

KILLER KANE—COMMENTS

Norm Malayney, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Can.

Re: Part II, "The War Diary of J.R. 'Killer' Kane" in Vol. 27, No. 4, Winter 1982. On page 272, mention is made of Lt. Daniel A. Story not returning from a 20 Feb. mission. His B-24 was seen sitting on a German aerodrome in Sicily.

According to *Aeroplane Monthly*, Dec. 1974, page 1047, after completing the mission, Lt. Story diverted to Malta. But in the darkness he landed in Sicily by mistake, giving the Luftwaffe an intact B-24 equipped with the latest bombsight.

LARRY BROWN—COMMENTS

John Underwood, Glendale, CA

I would like to add a bit to George Cull's article on Larry Brown, which to me was extremely interesting.

Barnhart-Brown biplane owned and flown by LWB from 1915 to 1917.

LWB-designed Kreutzer SM-4, 1928-29. Left to right, Joe Kreutzer, Hank Ogden and LWB.

Brown B-1 built for Ralph Bushey in 1934. This airplane lost its engine early on. Bushey was badly injured in the crash. It was acquired by Tony Le Vier and Billy Robinson, who rebuilt it for postwar racing in the midget (85 Continental) category. It was still extant in 1978 and had been re-engined with a Menasco some years earlier.

Lawrence W. Brown, Lee Miles and Leon Atwood with the Miles & Atwood Special, 1933. Gent on the right unidentified. Miles was killed in the M&A Special in 1937 when a wing fitting failed (also reported as a flying wire failure), thus ending a highly successful racing career.

Brown was involved with many other aircraft. He was chief engineer of the airplane department of Kinner Motors and designed one or two custom jobs. I believe one was the Model P Sedan and another was the Playboy.

Concerning the ultralight model described in Mr. Cull's article as the L-25. This airplane was reputed to be the L-20 and the prototype, N90843, was probably test flown in 1946. Three or four others were said to be under construction; however, the Haines engine apparently had more bugs than the company's funds could cope with. Possibly the FAA's files on N90843 would resolve the question. . . .

Further to Shelby Hagberg's letter: Clyde Ice is the gent in question and he quit flying at 90. Ed McCarty, Kimberly, Idaho, was still current at 95 when last heard from (1977). He was still flying down to the grocery store every day or so in the Ercope he bought new in 1947, his ranch being some distance out of town. Ed told me that he had taught his kids, his grandkids and at least one of his great grandchildren to fly when he was a CFI.

NEI CIVIL AIRCRAFT—CORRECTIONS

Gerard J. Casius, Cedarville, NJ

Reference my story on NEI civil aircraft in *AAHS Journal*, Summer 1983 issue, the following comments:

Since the article was first submitted in 1979, I have left Wichita and, via assignments in Africa and Holland, I am now back in the U.S., but at another address. Since I would still very much like to hear from fellow members on the NEI subject, I would like you

to correct the address—91 North Main St., Cedarville, NJ 08311—so that the mail won't get lost. The new phone is 609-447-3064.

Regarding the NEIAF serials for the impressed Wacos, Fairchild 24 and Piper J-4s, I would like to point out that these are "probables," not confirmed by photos or other records, except for WT-903. The numerals were issued in sequence, regardless of type; however, the prefix was used to indicate the manufacturer and/or model. Therefore, the Pipers, if they did get military serials at all, these would have been most likely a "P-", in any case not a "D", which stood for Douglas transport. One photograph exists (of allied aircraft captured by the Japanese) showing a J-4 with Dutch triangle military markings but without any serial visible.

Evidence for two of the DC-5s having an NEI military connection exists in the report of a KLM engineer who "saw them arrive by ship at Surabaya, marked with the orange triangle" and the fact that the prefix "D" was reserved for Douglas transport in the NEIAF numbering orders of 8/18/40. Subsequently, Harry Gann has supplied the enclosed photograph of c/n 428 and 430 being embarked at San Pedro, CA, on 7/24/40 for shipment to the NEI. Their original Dutch civil markings (PH-AXB *Boschduif*, (Wood-pigeon) and PH-AXE *Eend* (Duck) have simply been taped over and there is no evidence of military markings; however, these could have been applied immediately after arrival in the Indies, as seen by our KLM man. Furthermore, these DC-5s were owned by the NEI government, not KNILM.

Mr. Gann's information (from Douglas delivery records) reveals another mistake I repeated from other records, namely the tie-up between the c/n's and original Dutch (KIM) registrations, as shown above. Douglas records show c/n 424 and 426 delivered on 4/30/40 and 5/30/40 resp., as PJ-AIW and

San Pedro, CA, 7-24-40. PH-AXB *Boschduif* and PH-AXE *Eend*, being loaded aboard S.S. *Silverwood* for shipment to NEI.

(McDonnell Douglas via H. Gann)



AIZ. The original Dutch reg's for these have been PH-AXA *Alk* and -ALG *Grutto* but which was which is now unclear. Another mistake is that c/n 424 was a DC-5-510 (17 pax), not a -511 (22 pax) like the other three, although it may have been modified when it was returned from Curacao to Alhambra, CA, for overhaul before being shipped to the NEI in 1941.

AVIATION HISTORY—ON THE WING

Jack D. Swaney, Las Vegas, NV

Aviation historians generally catalyze their interest through the collection of books and photos, but another dimension can be extended via the medium of motion pictures.

Where better can the impression of a WWI dogfight be conveyed than through the viewing of such classics as *Hell's Angels*, *Wings* or *Dawn Patrol*. Sliding the time scale ahead we find the 1920s and '30s well represented by *The Helldivers*, *Devil Dogs of the Air*, not to mention *Men With Wings*. The Second World War is, of course, equally represented, but the point is, none of this material is any good if no one can see it!

Why does not some dedicated soul compile a list of these aviation epics from the past, at the same time informing interested persons the whys and wherefores of obtaining them for private viewing? True, the "Spads" flown in *Wings* were actually Boeing MB-3s, while Travel Airs and Waco 10s faked their way through *Dawn Patrol* and *Lilac Time*, but I'll settle for it! Where can I get segments from *The Blue Max* or *Darling Lilly*?" Someone out there must know.

Unpublished still photos must exist by the ton. An organization in Canoga Park, CA, known as Heritage Press, once claimed to have a stock of more than 25,000 aviation photos mostly from the 1920s and '30s. The trouble is I don't know where these people are now, nor others like them. I just hear rumors. Then, of course, we have the myriads of photos and films from the Army Air Ser-

vice, Air Corps and Navy, scattered to the four winds in ever-changing repositories. If I'm an aviation historian, as I claim to be, one would think that I would know who to contact about this, but I don't. Does anyone else?

Time is flying (no pun intended) and we can't expect to rely on such legendary collectors as Peter M. Bowers forever. Those out there who know the sources must share their information now, before all of this becomes lost forever.

THE UBIQUITOUS JENNY

D. Bruce Van Alstine, Baltimore, MD

This is in response to the item by Robert A. Berreyesa in the NEWS & COMMENT column of the Spring 1983 AAHS *Journal*. If Mr. Berreyesa would look at the PROFILE Publication No. 37 on the Curtiss JN-4, he would see that Peter Bowers has included a photo of a rotary-engined JN-4D on page 10. Whether or not it was light green I cannot determine.

In researching aviation history, I find I am no longer surprised, but constantly fascinated, by the "odds and mods." The ubiquitous *Jenny* was a prime example of modifications to improve performance or simply keep it airworthy.

THOMAS MORSE SCOUT

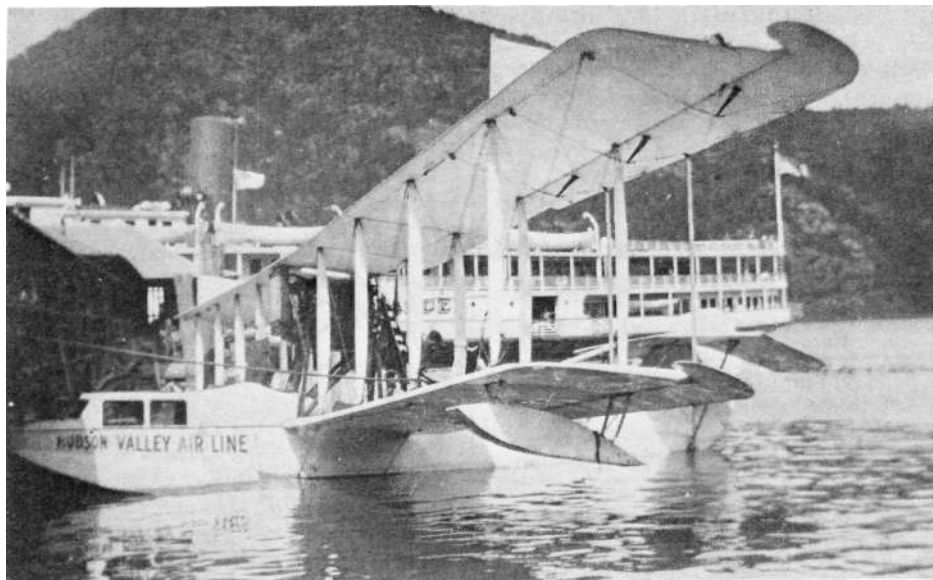
Jack P. Swaney, Las Vegas, NV

Aviation historians constantly emphasize the importance of a/c serial numbers, and I must admit they may have a point.

Back in 1938 when I was a kid in Los Angeles, I dropped into Arrigo Balboni's legendary aircraft junkyard out on Riverside Drive, to browse and fantasize among the derelicts. When I walked into the single-storied, garage-type building that fronted the establishment I was struck by the sight of the pristine fuselage of a newly overhauled Thomas Morse Scout, minus its wings, sparkling in new fabric and olive drab dope, while up front two cursing mechanics were struggling with a new looking Le Rhone rotary onto its mount.

I watched for a half hour or so, the farthest thing from my mind being the mundane fact that all airplanes have a permanent ID number. In those days just to be around an airplane was enough, but had I known that 40 years later I'd be pondering the fate of that grand old crate, I probably would have recorded it. I have reason to believe it still exists in California (flyable) but I can never know for sure, for Balboni had enough T.M. parts on hand to assemble several ships. So I can only speculate, the absence of that critical number leaving me with almost nothing definitive.

Aviation in 1938 was changing with a rapidity that was almost unbelievable, and few cared about the passing of those relics from the "Great War." We felt we were rushing towards some grand tomorrow, in which they could have no place—or so I thought then.



HUDSON VALLEY AIR LINE

Brendan P. Carmody, Azle, TX

A friend from my days as a New Yorker found the enclosed snapshot among the personal effects of his father-in-law after his demise. It was taken by his father-in-law in 1921. Nothing more is known.

Perhaps an AAHS member can provide information about the Hudson Valley Air Line. Was it affiliated with the present Hudson River Day Line, an excursion boat operator, or one of its predecessors? Is there a story here—and maybe some long-lost, never-before published pictures?

I've done little such research, but would try if there's reasonable hope I might uncover a fascinating (and probably short-lived) moment in aviation history. It seems to almost be my duty—the way this faded photo fell into my hands. Has it already been researched and recorded—maybe in a non-aviation publication such as *Steamboat Bill*? That doesn't mean there isn't a possibility for an AAHS *Journal* article notwithstanding. It could be an excellent starting point for more aviation-oriented research.

Let's hear from anyone with an interest or information. Brendan P. Carmody, 305 Timberlake Drive, Azle, TX 76020.

PINEAPPLE AIRLINES—CORRECTIONS

Nicholas M. Williams, Waverly, LA

Kudos to all concerned on the editorial staff for the excellent presentation of my history of VR-21 (JAAHS, Spring 1983). Unfortunately, I received an interesting photo of one of the squadron's rare PBY-6As too late for inclusion in the first installment. Also, I failed to spot one omission in my manuscript: the second line on page 51 should read: "Fleet Logistic Support Squadron Twenty-One. . ."

The new type size is a definite improvement, to my mind, although I'm sure some readers will be cursing the change. As usual,

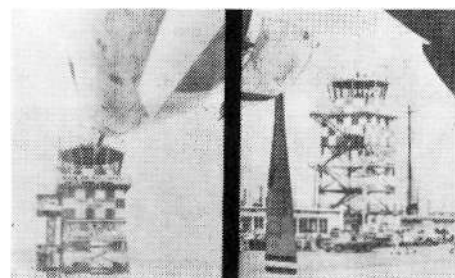
the rest of the *Journal* is top-notch with excellent layout and photo reproduction, although some News & Comment letters appear twice! Keep up the good work!

ITAZUKE TOWER, JAPAN

Leon Cleaver, Vermilion, OH

Lt. Jan Woods' article, "There's More to Flying Than Meets the Sky," from the Winter 1982 *Journal* brings back memories as I was a control tower operator at Castle AFB, California (2035th Comm. Sq.) during 1961-1962 and at Itazuke Air Base, Japan (1955th Comm. Sq.) during 1962-1964. Enclosed are two photos of Itazuke Tower which appeared in the base newspaper while I was stationed there.

In the photo taken under a wing of a C-54, the caption reads, "Itazuke Tower is the base's most distinctive landmark. The Tower is known throughout the Air Force from the song, 'Itazuke Tower'." (March 6, 1964, issue of the *Itazuke Sonicle*.) The other photo taken under the nose of an F-105D reads, "The first local F-105 points toward Itazuke Tower" (*Itazuke Sonicle*). This photo was taken on Sunday, May 12, 1963, when the first F-105D of the 35th TFS, 8th TFW, arrived at the base which ultimately replaced Wing F-100s. The banner directly below the tower windows says, "Welcome Home Mach 2 Panthers"; below that, "Field Elevation 30 Feet"; and then further below, "Itazuke Tower" (ringed with song notes). This last sign now resides at the Air Force Museum, Dayton, Ohio, being taken there shortly after



the base was turned over to the Japanese around 1970. By the way, I was in the tower cab when this photo was taken.

Lt. Woods' article brings back good memories of service life and the ups and downs of a tower operator. Thanks for taking me back.

CURTISS CONDOR—CHINA

W. A. Spencer, Mesa, AZ

Checking through the AAHS magazine, Vol. 12, No. 1, Spring 1967; "Production of the Curtiss Condors by Serial Numbers," by Arthur William Matthews.

Curtiss *Condor* fuselage No. 52 was delivered to the Chinese Air Force at the Central Aviation School, Hangchow, China, in March 1934, was assembled by the American instructors of the Jouett Mission under the supervision of Harry Gores of Wright Aeronautical, and was test flown by Frank Hawks. He also flew around China giving demonstration flights. On one of his trips he was making touch-and-go flights, the warning bell for his landing gear bothered him so, he stuffed his handkerchief up in the bell. But when he came in for his final landing he forgot about the handkerchief and made a belly landing.

The plane was not damaged but one of the Curtiss electric reversible propellers was badly bent. We solved that by installing a Hamilton-Standard, fixed-pitch propeller in its place. We set the Curtiss at fixed pitch and it worked fine. When the Jouett Mission completed their contract and returned to the States in June 1935 three of the Americans remained in China on contract to the government. They were W.C. Kent, W.A. Spencer and Edward Wingerter.

The *Condor* was taken over by Dr. H.H. Kung, the Minister of Finance, and head of the Bank of China. Kent and Spencer were asked to fly the plane for the bank. Silver was being replaced by currency and they wanted this currency flown out to the various branches of the bank.

We had many experiences flying the plane out in Western China up and down the Yangtse River through the gorges, where there was no place to land except Hankow, Chungking, Kweiyang and Ichang.

The plane came to a disastrous ending early one morning at Hungjao Airdrome in Shanghai. Kent and I were on our way out to the airdrome from the hotel as we were to make a trip to Chungking that day. When we arrived at the airdrome all we saw was the skeleton of our plane. The mechanic was trying to start the engines when one of them backfired and set the grass on fire below the engine. The Chinese mechanics and coolies made no effort to put the fire out so the plane was destroyed.

That was the month of May 1936. That finished our contract so Kent and I returned to the States. Walter Kent returned to China later to fly for C.N.A.C. and was killed by a Japanese fighter while he was landing a DC-3 in Southern China in 1940. I went to work for Douglas Aircraft Co. in California. I retired from McDonnell Douglas in 1969.

CCC'S LIBERATOR

John H. Heyer, Oklahoma City, OK

After reviewing Bill Slate's letter on the Continental Can Company LB-30 (XC-CAY) in Vol. 27, No. 4, I located a photo of the same aircraft in my collection which I took at Love Field at Dallas, Texas, during February 1962. Mr. Slate's photo crediting the "Steve Hudek Collection" presumably was taken after April 14, 1959, when ownership of LB-30 N12905 (c/n 18) changed from Continental Can Company to PEMEX (Petroles Mexicanos), the Mexican national petroleum company. After the sale, it acquired Mexican registry as XC-CAY and must have retained Continental Can's paint scheme for a period of time until being repainted in the PEMEX livery. When I first spotted PEMEX's *liberator* in 1962, it was finished in a dark green similar to "British Racing Green" with the balance of the fuselage painted in an off white. Wingtips outboard of the ailerons were finished in orange dayglo paint. Under surfaces of the wings were painted dark green with "XC-CAY" under the port wing in off white. The registration was also displayed vertically on each vertical stabilizer with the green, white, and red Mexican tricolor flag painted directly behind the registration on each rudder. The bulged nose was painted flat black, and 20 small flags in four rows of five were carried under the port cockpit window, indicating countries in Central and

South America which the *Liberator* had visited on behalf of PEMEX.

I recall seeing LB-30 (c/n 18) at Dallas Love Field on several different occasions during the early '60s, and it was always a colorful visitor that received many an eye-filling glance as well as frequent halting stares from local passersby.

After 1963 I did not see LB-30 No. 18 again until 1972 at a Carswell AFB open house where, operated by the Confederate Air Force, it was fitted out in a wartime paint scheme as *Diamond Lil* (N12905). Suspecting that *Lil* was the same a/c earlier operated by PEMEX, I was informed upon asking that the Confederate Colonels had acquired the B-24 as a gift from PEMEX in May 1968.



Consolidated LB-30 c/n 18 seen at Love Field, Dallas, TX, Feb. 1962. It was then owned by Petroles Mexicanos (PEMEX)XC-CAY. (Photo by John H. Heyer)

Consolidated LB-30 c/n 18 at Harlingen, TX, March 1980. It was then Confederate Air Force B-24D *Diamond Lil*, N12905. (John H. Heyer)



TRAVEL AIR MYSTERY SHIPS

Jesse Davidson, 3 Kings Point Road,
Great Neck, New York 11024

Thank you for the opportunity to submit a photo of the Travel Air Mystery "S"—the "strutless 400." Jimmy Doolittle is shown standing beside the only one built in that configuration.

I am also including a rear-view shot of the Texaco 13 which provides an excellent view of the struts—a feature that was inherently evident in all Travel Air Model R ships.

I would like to suggest, if it meets with the approval of writers of letters to NEWS & COMMENT, that their home or mailing address be included along with their name.

This would enable AAHS members to correspond directly with the writers, possibly to offer additional information, expand on the subject and offer historical and pictorial documentation, all of which benefits and aims of the membership at large; to disseminate and share a subject of interest that binds us together.

Please note if you wish your complete address published with your future COMMENTS.
—Ed.

VPB-116—GENTZ CREW MEMBERS

Jack Gentz

Jack Gentz, who sent in the PB4Y-1 photos in the Forum of Flight, would like to hear from former members of his crew and squadron. Anyone with information can contact Jack via Jon Aldrich, PO Box 706, Groveland, CA 95321. Shown above is Gentz (fifth from the left) with his crew in the South Pacific.





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